He burned out
his pure life force
to bring us dignity,
to bring us a chance
to love ourselves
with commitment.
He knew the simple
spilling of seed
would not be enough
to bind us.

It is difficult
to stop marching, Joseph,
impossible to stop our assault.
The tributes and testimonies
in your honor
flare up like torches.
Every night
a light blazes for you
in one of our hearts.

There was no one lonelier
than you, Joseph.
Perhaps you wanted love
so desperately and pleaded
with God for the only mercy
that could be spared.
Perhaps God knew
you couldn't be given
more than public love
in this lifetime.

When I stand
on the front lines now,
cussing the lack of truth,
the absence of willful change

and strategic coalitions,
I realize sewing quilts
will not bring you back
nor save us.

It's too soon
to make monuments
for all we are losing,
for the lack of truth
as to why we are dying,
who wants us dead,
what purpose does it serve?

When my brother fell
I picked up his weapons.
I didn't question
whether I could aim
or be as precise as he.
A needle and thread
were not among
his things
I found.